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STATE FOR S/P Greg Behrman and NEA/ARP Josh Harris

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [XF](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: FULL BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR SAUDI  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT NOMINEES

REF: A) STATE 112486  
B) RIYADH 1584

¶1. Mission Saudi Arabia provides the following expanded background and justifications for its nominations for the President's summit on entrepreneurship (nominees previously submitted ref B). Please note one replacement from our previous submission: Ms. Maria Jamal Mahdaly, who was recently named one of the top 30 student entrepreneurs in the world, was substituted for Mr. Tariq Al-Tamimi.

Nominees with background and justification:

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Ms. Rasha El Hoshan  
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¶2. Rasha El Hoshan was born on November 6, 1971. She received her bachelors degree, in international politics, from American University in 1994 and a masters in exhibit design from the Pratt Institute in New York in 1998. In 2000, she opened Hoshan Design, independent from the Hoshan Group, her family's business. Originally a landscaping and related accessories showroom, Ms. El Hoshan expanded her offerings to include modern furniture, influenced by her days in New York. Her showroom reached a turning point when it secured the exclusive brands Fendi Casa and B&B Italia. It has since been integrated into the Hoshan Group.

¶3. In 2002, she was introduced to a major art patron, Rifat Sheikh Al-Ardh, who asked her to design an exhibition at the King Abdulaziz Public Library for Prince Faisal Bin Abdullah Bin Mohamed, entitled "Al Furussiya" (the art of horsemanship). She began to focus on preserving Saudi art and culture through museum and exhibition design.

¶4. Ms. El Hoshan is a member in the Chamber of Commerce and was invited to be a member of a 40-member special delegation to discuss the most important issues facing Saudi Arabia today with King Abdullah.

¶5. Justification: A rising star in the Saudi business world, Ms. El Hoshan started her own business and made that business a success without the help of her family's company. She is a frequent speaker at international business conferences and an important example for aspiring Saudi businesswomen.

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Mr. Khaled Abdulrahman Mohammed Al-Abdulkarim  
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¶6. Born January 20, 1958 in Dammam, Khaled Al-Abdulkarim is the Chief Executive Officer of the Al-Abdulkarim Holding Company, a major industrial firm in the Kingdom's Eastern Province. He is also the president of Naizak, an IT consulting firm with operations in both Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

¶7. Mr. Al-Abdulkarim serves on several prominent boards, including

that of the Al-Sharqia Chamber of Commerce and the Saudi Cement Company. He is a member of the National Center for Family Business, of the National Committee for Accreditation of the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization, and of several Saudi business councils (including the Saudi - U.S. Business Council).

¶8. Justification: A prominent Saudi business leader, Khaled Al-Abdulkarim has been at the forefront of job training for Saudis in the Kingdom. Through his company's partnerships with prominent international firms, he has brought important opportunities for young Saudis to develop their skills.

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Mr. Walid Ahmad Al-Juffali  
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¶9. Walid Al-Juffali, along with his two brothers, runs the Al-Jaffali Group. Since the late 1940's, the Al-Juffali Group has played a major role in the development of Saudi Arabia. It has also committed itself to training Saudi youth for various areas of employment. One of the group's first major projects was to help develop Saudi Arabia's infrastructure through the building of electric power utilities. They moved on to extend their activities to telecommunications, transportation, information technology, and air conditioning.

¶10. The group operates joint ventures with numerous high-profile international partners, including IBM, DuPont, and Dow Chemical. Walid Al-Jaffali has also set up his own business, separate from the family conglomerate, W Investments Limited, with the goal of developing new business prospects.

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¶11. In 2006, Walid Al-Jaffali became the frontman for a Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) show called "The Investor." The show highlights business opportunities for young entrepreneurs in the Middle East.

¶12. Justification: Walid Al-Jaffali runs a major business that focuses on training Saudi youth, including through the Juffali Training Centre established by Walid's father in 1976. Working with MBC, he has taken on an active role promoting entrepreneurship to young Saudis and is a prominent fixture in the Saudi business community.

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Ms. Loubna Al-Olayan  
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¶13. Lubna S. Al-Olayan is the Chief Executive Officer of the Olayan Financing Company (OFC), the holding entity for the Olayan Group's operations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. Founded in 1947 by her father, Suliman S. Al-Olayan, the Olayan Group is a private multinational enterprise engaged in distribution, manufacturing, services and investments. OFC operates or actively participates in more than 40 companies, often in partnership with leading multinationals. OFC is also one of the largest investors in the Saudi and regional stock markets.

¶14. Ms. Al-Olayan credits her success to her father, who encouraged her to join the family company in 1983 after a stint working in New York, at a time when few women were welcomed in Saudi corporations.

¶15. In December 2004, Ms. Al-Olayan was elected to the Board of Saudi Hollandi Bank, a publicly listed company in Saudi Arabia. In September 2006 and April 2007, Ms. Al-Olayan joined the International Advisory Boards of Rolls Royce and Citigroup respectively. She is a member of the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum, and the International Advisory Board of the Council on Foreign Relations.

¶16. Justification: Lubna Al-Olayan is arguably the most prominent and successful Saudi businesswoman. She has been very active in promoting women's issues in the Kingdom and serves as a role model for female entrepreneurs trying to break into a realm still largely

dominated by men.

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Mr. Abdulrahman Tarabzouni  
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¶17. Abdulrahman I. Tarabzouni is currently leading Google's expansion into emerging markets in the Gulf. Prior to Google, Mr. Tarabzouni's prior work experience included work for both startups and large corporations in the fields of information technology, financial trading, product design and strategy consulting. He held positions at Microsoft, Oracle, Morgan Stanley, and Atos Origin. As an entrepreneur, Mr. Tarabzouni founded Mubadiroon, a hybrid venture capital fund and incubator for tech startups, Aitech, a technology development and consulting firm, and Syphir, an MIT-based startup that won the MIT \$50K Arab Entrepreneurship Competition in 2009.

¶18. Mr. Tarabzouni founded SETLA (Saudi Entrepreneurs and Technology Leaders Association) in which he co-organized the first MIT Global Startup Workshop (GSW) in the Middle East, held in Abu Dhabi in ¶2005. He held a seat on Microsoft's Board of the Future where he advises Microsoft on future market trends and knowledge-based industries, and was a member of the Saudi Aramco's Innovation Leadership Advisory Board.

¶19. Mr. Tarabzouni is a fellow of the Young Arab Leaders and is the Gulf Ambassador to the "Innovation for Peace" program sponsored by the United Nations and the World Summit for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. He has also been named by Arabian Business as one of the most influential 30 young leaders in the Arab World on the annual "30 under 30: The Next Arab Generation Leaders" list.

¶20. Justification: Abdulrahman Tarabzouni personifies entrepreneurship among young Saudis. He has demonstrated that Saudi entrepreneurs can compete against the best in the world and come out ahead. He also serves as a leader outside of his business activities through his work with the Young Arab Leaders and with the United Nations.

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Dr. Basmah Mosleh Omair  
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¶21. Dr. Omair is currently the Executive Director of Khadijah Bint Khouwailid Center for Businesswomen (KBKC), an umbrella organization for social advocacy groups organized under the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Founded in 2007, Dr. Omair restructured the

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center to make it the first lobbying center that systematically reviews Saudi laws to identify discriminatory practices within the government and lobbies to change these laws. It also works to promote social change and to empower women economically and socially. As a result of KBKC's efforts, major changes were introduced to labor laws that now allow women in Saudi Arabia to work in a mixed gender environment.

¶22. Prior to her current post, Dr. Omair was a consultant for American University in Washington, DC, and the Global Peace Organization, where she assisted in evaluating the education system in Iraq in 2003. She is also a board member at the Social Economic Circle for the Mecca Region, and a member of the Young Arab Leaders.

¶23. Justification: Dr. Omair's has the potential to play a major transformational role in the Saudi society through her leadership of KBKC. Her participation in the conference is consistent with President Obama's Cairo Speech goal of expanding women's rights in the Muslim World, and the Mission's objective to advocate democratic participation in the decision-making process in Saudi Arabia.

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Dr. Lama Al-Sulaiman  
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¶24. Dr. Al-Sulaiman is the president of Khadijah bint Khouwalid

Center for Businesswomen (KBKC), part of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, an influential businesswomen's centre in Saudi Arabia. She made history in 2005 when she became one of the first Saudi women to win elected office as a board member of Jeddah's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI). Re-elected to the board in late 2009, she was also elected first deputy chairman of the chamber, the first woman to hold this position.

¶25. Dr. Al-Sulaiman has been recognised as a Young Arab Leader by the World Economic Forum and is currently a director of Rolaco Trading and Contracting, the National Institute of Health Services, the National Home Health Care Foundation, and the Economic and Social Circle of the Mecca Region.

¶26. After earning her B.Sc. in Biochemistry at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia, Dr. Al-Sulaiman pursued postgraduate degrees in nutrition from King's College in London, receiving both her M.Sc. and her Ph.D.

¶27. Justification: Dr. Al-Sulaiman has raised the bar for Saudi women in business governance. Her elevation to the deputy chairman position in the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry has set a new standard for Saudi businesswomen and serves as an inspiration for a generation of young Saudis.

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Ms. Maria Jamal Mahdaly  
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¶28. Ms. Mahdaly, a native of Jeddah, began working at age 15 and founded FAINAK (slang Arabic for "Where are you?"), a youth-focused social-networking and information site when she was only 19. She was recently named one of the top 30 student entrepreneurs in the world in the annual Global Student Entrepreneur Awards competition (GSEA), part of the Entrepreneurs' Organization ([www.eonetwork.org](http://www.eonetwork.org)).

In addition to her recognition by GSEA, she has also participated in global conferences such as the Youth Alliance Summit and The Two Kingdoms Dialogue Forum. Through her efforts with FAINAK, Ms. Mahdaly has received more than ten awards for her achievements and community service. She also received a university scholarship.

¶29. In only 2 years as a businesswoman -- and while pursuing full-time academic studies -- Ms. Mahdaly developed FAINAK from the ground up. FAINAK is an English-language site ([www.fainak.com](http://www.fainak.com)) with over 30,000 members and rapidly growing, connects businesses, from multinational corporations to small and medium sized enterprises, with Saudi youth, who represent approximately 70 percent of the country's population.

¶30. Ms. Mahdaly is a student at the prestigious Dar Al-Hikma College in Jeddah, KSA.

¶31. Justification: At age 21, Ms. Maria Jamal Mahdaly is not only Consulate General Jeddah's youngest contact but also one of our most dynamic and has the greatest overall potential for reaching young Saudis. Ms. Mahdaly is currently developing a social entrepreneurship program in collaboration with organizations for young adults in Jeddah. She is pursuing her higher education in business, with a focus on entrepreneurship.

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Ms. Hana Al-Zuheir  
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¶32. Hana Al-Zuhair is the Director of the Prince Sultan Fund for Supporting Women's Small Business Projects. She has been the Director since the organization's inception in 2006. Prior to that, she was the head of the Business Women's Center in the women's section of the Eastern Province Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

¶33. Ms. Al-Zuhair is not only the driving force behind the business ventures of the Prince Sultan Fund, but also the social ventures of the Princess Jawaher Center for Research and Development -- an institution inside the Fund -- which is on the leading edge of

women's advancement in the Eastern Province.

¶34. Ms. Al-Zuhair was elected to represent the Eastern Province for a meeting with the Majlis Al-Shura (National Consultative Council) to evaluate, and provide recommendations related to, the country's labor laws. She brought a group of young women with her to discuss the situation of women in the Kingdom and the barriers to their full participation in the economy. Ms. Al-Zuhair was also asked to represent the first female Saudi delegation at the UN General Assembly in 2007, where she conducted a panel discussion on the economic empowerment of women.

¶35. Hana Al-Zuhair holds an MBA with two majors -- Human Resource Development and Entrepreneurship -- from Bahrain University, as well as a B.A. in English from the College of Arts in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

¶36. Justification: The 2008 recipient of "Woman Achiever of the Year" from the Middle East Businesswomen and Leaders Achievement Awards, Hana Al-Zuhair has spent her life expanding opportunities for female entrepreneurs in the Kingdom by engaging the Saudi government and the international community. Her work to bring the difficulties facing women to the attention of the Majlis Al-Shoura and of the United Nations shows that she has crossed that difficult transition from succeeding in business to enabling others to succeed in business by reshaping the regulatory environment.

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Ms. Samia Ali al-Edrisi  
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¶37. Samia Ali al-Edrisi is currently the CEO and Chairman of the Board of the first all-female investment company in the Kingdom, the Eastern Forum Co. Ltd. for Advancement and Development. She is also a freelance translator and editor for several local and regional clients, including Saudi Aramco (Samia recently completed editing a 134-page study for the UAE Parliament on women's participation in parliamentary elections).

¶38. Ms. Al-Edrisi is a founding board member of the Businesswomen's Forum in the Eastern Province (BWFEP) and has 35 years professional experience in the public and private sectors, in training, planning, and public relations. She joined the private sector in 1996 and, as partner, established Sidana Company Limited. In 2005, she unsuccessfully ran for a seat at the Asharqiya Chamber board elections--the first time women were allowed to submit a candidacy. She has a long record of participation in numerous organizations at the regional level, including in the first women's committee at the Asharqiya Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Dammam; in the newly founded Women's Committee of the "Prince Mohammed bin Fahad's Program for Human Resource Development;" and as a board member of the Saudi Aramco Employee Association (SAEA) from 1988 to 1995.

¶39. On the international level, Ms. Al-Edrisi is a member of the Federation of Arab Women Investors. She was the first female member of the Saudi official delegation to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in Geneva in 2003, a member of the Saudi Businesswomen's Delegation to the Women in Business International Conference held in London in 2003, and a member of the first Saudi businesswomen's delegation to the U.S. in 1998.

¶40. Samia al-Edrisi holds a B.A. in Political Science and Economics from the American University in Cairo (1972); and a certification in Electronic Tools for Translators and Cultural Knowledge in Translation, London Metropolitan University (2005).

¶41. Justification: Samia Al-Edrisi has shown that women can be involved not just in business in the Kingdom, but in financing business. Like Ms. Al-Zuhair above, she has engaged governments and the international community on behalf of women seeking greater opportunities for economic participation.

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